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*On a ground Stone Implement, from Flempton, near Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.*

Early last year, while searching for flint implements in a gravel pit at Flempton, about five miles from Bury St. Edmunds, I found the curiously-shaped stone which I now exhibit, and which doubtless, at the present time, when the ground stone axe found in the gravel pit at Malton is causing some little controversy, will interest those who make archaic anthropology their especial study.

Flempton, I should add, is situated in the valley of the Larke, between Icklingham and Bury St. Edmunds, at both of which places flint implements have been found in the "Drift," and the pit, in a heap of gravel near some working in which I found my specimen, is upon the upper level gravel, which there reposes directly upon the chalk. No flint implements have to the present been observed, though mammalian remains occur occasionally.

The stone in question is four inches and a half in length, by about three in greatest breadth, and has a thickness of three-quarters of an inch. I am at present unable to name the rock to which it belongs, but may state that it is of a gritty nature, rather soft, grey in colour, with numerous groups of small black shining particles interspersed. In form it resembles considerably one type of ground stone axe found in Denmark, having a semielliptic edge at its broadest end, faces of equal convexity, and square converging sides. In fact there seems but little doubt that the specimen owes its form partially to the hand of man; whether it is merely a surface example or came from the undisturbed gravel must of course remain an open question, though from the situation in which I found it, its general water-worn appearance, and the fact of its being deeply stained and incrustated with the red soil of the pit, induce me to believe that it is of higher antiquity than the "Neolithic period," and might probably have formed a portion of the true gravel bed.

In conclusion, as the evidence in this and the other two cases of the reputed discovery of ground stone axes in the gravel undoubtedly is, it must, I think, cause us to pause before we accept the proposition that the men of the Drift-period had no ground stone tools, or that they were in such an utter state of barbarism as to be unable to manufacture such, and it must likewise stimulate those who like myself are seeking in the valley-gravels evidence of these, our very remote precursors, to look for other signs of them besides the now well-known flakes and hatchets of flint.

HENRY PRIGG, Jun.

Mr. CHARLESWORTH was of opinion that there was nothing about the specimen which admitted of its being considered definitely a human production. Even flints were often found which resembled natural forms, and if that occurs with such a material as flint, there was nothing remarkable in a soft stone being worn into a shape resembling an artificial implement. The material of the specimen on the table was very unlike that usually selected for the formation of implements.

Professor MACDONALD concurred with Mr. Charlesworth, observing

that he should hesitate to say that it possessed any of the characteristics of a genuine flint implement, both from the nature of the stone and its general form.

Mr. BLYTH thought it was artificial and not a natural production, but he doubted whether it was genuine.

Col. Fox considered it might probably be a pebble in the process of formation, but not finished.

A short letter from Dr. Carter Blake, being his first communication since his arrival in Nicaragua, was next read. In it he stated that he hoped ere long to give some account of the anthropology of Nicaragua in general. He had been investigating some ruined cities in the Chontales district, which were covered with hieroglyphic inscriptions.

Capt. PIM moved the thanks of the meeting to Dr. Carter Blake for his letter. He said he anticipated that communications of great importance to the Society would be received from him ere long, and that certain crania would be forwarded at the same time. He had seen the hieroglyphics on the buildings mentioned, but had not had an opportunity of examining them, which could be done by Dr. Carter Blake, to whom the Council of the Central American Association had directed that every facility should be offered for his investigations, and for adding to the scientific knowledge of that interesting district.

The DIRECTOR seconded the vote of thanks, which was carried unanimously.

The following paper on Darwinism and Anthropology, by Prof. Hermann Schaaffhausen, was then read :—

*Darwinism and Anthropology.* By Prof. HERMANN SCHAAFFHAUSEN.

The question has recently been much discussed in England, whether the theory of Darwin is adequate to explain the variety of human races, and the physical and mental development of the human species. We should not do violence to the phenomena in favour of any theory, but rather look upon the anthropological facts as the touchstone for the question whether the so-called struggle for existence and natural selection represent a universal law of nature. The study of human races, offers greater difficulties than that of plants and animals, because a new force, as it were, presents itself, namely, the intellectual activity of man, whose influence upon the physical conformation is as potent as any other determining human nature.

Many of the characters which distinguish human races, must be ascribed to climate, such as the colour of the skin, hair, iris, height and constitution of the body. It is the task of physiology to furnish the proofs for the correctness of this view, by studying the intimate relations between the activity of the organs and vital conditions. Many naturalists have, however, considered these physical qualities of human races, as independent of the influence of external nature; because, in the distribution of races over the globe, this dependence cannot always be traced, and because phenomena present themselves in opposition to the above view. Thus, it is said, tall men are found both in the torrid and frigid zones; the colour of the skin is frequently